

19. (Amended) A method of establishing an attendant/attendee relationship between plural terminal end-points via an H.323-based communication system, comprising the steps of:

- creating a configuration database storing attendant and attendee relationships between respective ones of the terminal end-points;
- receiving an incoming call addressed to a particular number;
- accessing the configuration database to determine if the number corresponds to an attendant or attendee terminal end-point;
- if the number corresponds to an attendant terminal end-point, transmitting a line appearance that identifies an origin of the incoming call to the attendant terminal end-point; and
- if the number corresponds to an attendee terminal end-point, transmitting line appearances that identify the origin of the incoming call to the attendee terminal end-point and to the attendant terminal end-point associated in the configuration database with the attendee.

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kumar et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,006,253) in view of Pepper et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,930,700).

By this Amendment, Applicants propose amending claims 1-4, 9, 15, 17, and 19 to improve form. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

The Examiner has seemingly maintained the rejection set forth in the last Office Action, dated January 20, 2000. In the Response to Arguments section of the present Office Action (page 6), the Examiner presented reasons why the Examiner disagrees with Applicants'

arguments set forth in the last Amendment with regard to claims 1, 9, 17, and 19. The reasons the Examiner presented only addressed independent claim 1. The Examiner did not address Applicants' arguments with regard to independent claims 9, 15, 17, or 19. If the Examiner did not find Applicants' arguments persuasive, the Examiner is requested to provide reasons why the arguments are not persuasive, instead of merely reiterating the previous rejection.

With regard to independent claim 1, the Examiner alleged that the combination of Kumar et al. and Pepper et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed (Office Action, pages 6-7). The Examiner apparently equates the subscriber phone book and date book disclosed by Pepper et al. with the claimed line appearance signals (Office Action, page 7). Applicants submit that a phone book and date book are not line appearance signals as described in Applicants' specification. Nevertheless, to expedite prosecution, Applicants propose amending claims 1-4, 9, 15, 17, and 19 to specify that the line appearance signals identify the origins of one or more incoming calls.

The Examiner also asserted, for the first time, that the specification provides no support for simultaneously transmitting multiple incoming calls to a selected terminal (Office Action, page 7). Applicants disagree. This feature is specifically recited at page 4, lines 17-18, and implied at page 9, lines 2-6. This feature was also recited in original claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the feature finds adequate support in the original specification, which, of course, includes the original claims.

In the Office Action, beginning at page 2, the Examiner rejected claims 1-19 as unpatentable over Kumar et al. and Pepper et al. The Examiner alleged that this combination of references discloses the invention substantially as claimed. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Kumar et al. discloses an H.323 system that provides a back-channel for receiver terminals in a loosely-coupled conference (col. 2, lines 46-63; Fig. 1). Pepper et al. discloses a system that allows a subscriber to have incoming telephone calls screened to identify those calls that are of the highest importance to the subscriber (col. 4, lines 62-65).

By contrast, the present invention recited in independent claim 1, for example, includes a combination of elements, including a gateway and a signal routing agent. The gateway communicates with a switched circuit network and translates switched circuit network-compatible signals into computer network-compatible signals. The signal routing agent communicates with the gateway and with one or more terminals. The signal routing agent receives plural incoming calls from the gateway addressed to a selected one of the terminals and simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify origins of the incoming calls to the selected terminal.

Neither Kumar et al. nor Pepper et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests this claimed combination of elements. Among other things, neither reference, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a signal routing agent that receives plural incoming calls and simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify the origins of the incoming calls to a selected terminal.

The Examiner admitted that Kumar et al. fails to disclose a signal routing agent that simultaneously transmits plural line appearances to a selected terminal (Office Action, page 3). The Examiner relied upon Pepper et al. for allegedly disclosing this element. The Examiner alleged that Pepper et al. discloses a personal digital assistant (PDA) connected with programmed software stored in a database to automatically transmit appearance signals to the

screen of the PDA (Office Action, page 3). Regardless of the accuracy of the Examiner's allegation, Applicants respectfully submit that Pepper et al. fails to disclose the signal routing agent, as currently recited in independent claim 1.

Pepper et al. discloses a system that includes a PDA operating in conjunction with a signaling network (Fig. 3). The signaling network includes a database that maintains a network copy of a subscriber's daily schedule and client list that are used, along with a subscriber's default profile, to determine which calls to forward directly to the subscriber at his current location and which calls to forward to the subscriber's voice mail box (col. 6, lines 5-11). When a call arrives for the subscriber, the signaling network answers the call, determines the call's origin if possible, determines a priority for the call, and routes the call based on the priority (col. 6, lines 12-54). The subscriber may be notified via a pop-up window on the PDA of the presence of a pending call (col. 6, lines 42-45; Fig. 10). The subscriber may also be notified of recently received messages, such as voice mail messages (col. 8, lines 60-64; Fig. 7).

Pepper et al. fails to disclose or suggest a signal routing agent that receives plural incoming calls and simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify the origins of the incoming calls to a selected terminal, as recited in claim 1. In fact, Pepper et al. fails to address multiple incoming calls being received and, therefore, fails to disclose simultaneously transmitting plural line appearance signals that identify the origins of the incoming calls to a selected terminal. Kumar et al. provides nothing to cure these deficiencies in the disclosure of Pepper et al.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is patentable over Kumar et al. and Pepper et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. Applicants

further submit that independent claim 15 and dependent claims 2-8 and 16 are patentable over the above-recited combination of documents for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 1.

Independent claim 9 recites a combination of elements, including a signal routing agent, a gateway, and at least one gatekeeper. The gateway receives an incoming call and translates the call into computer network-compatible signals. The gatekeeper communicates with the gateway and in response to receipt of the incoming call controls the gateway to transmit the computer network-compatible signals to the signal routing agent. The signal routing agent in response to receipt of the computer network-compatible signals identifies corresponding ones of the terminals assigned to receive the computer network-compatible signals and transmits line appearance messages that identify the origin of the incoming call to each of the terminals.

Neither Kumar et al. nor Pepper et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests this claimed combination of elements. Among other things, neither reference, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a signal routing agent that receives computer network-compatible signals corresponding to an incoming call, identifies corresponding terminals assigned to receive the signals, and transmits line appearance messages that identify the origin of the incoming call to each of the terminals.

Kumar et al. is silent with regard to this element. Pepper et al. discloses routing a call to locations in the alternative only (col. 12, lines 7-67). Pepper et al. discloses "[d]epending on the subscriber's schedule and the caller's assigned priority, the caller may be connected directly to the subscriber at a telephone number listed in the appointment calendar or to the PDA 200 (if it has voice communications) or to any other predetermined call delivery address" (emphasis added)

(col. 6, lines 37-42). Therefore, Pepper et al. fails to disclose a signal routing agent that transmits line appearance messages to multiple terminals addressed by an incoming call.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 9 is patentable over Kumar et al. and Pepper et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. Applicants further submit that independent claims 17 and 19 and dependent claims 10-14 and 18 are patentable over the above-identified combination of documents for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 9.

Independent claim 19 recites a combination of steps of a method for establishing an attendant/attendee relationship between plural terminal end-points via an H.323-based communication system. The method includes creating a configuration database storing attendant and attendee relationships between respective ones of the terminal end-points; receiving an incoming call addressed to a particular number; accessing the configuration database to determine if the number corresponds to an attendant or attendee terminal end-point; if the number corresponds to an attendant terminal end-point, transmitting a line appearance that identifies an origin of the incoming call to the attendant terminal end-point; and if the number corresponds to an attendee terminal end-point, transmitting line appearances that identify the origin of the incoming call to the attendee terminal end-point and to the attendant terminal end-point associated in the configuration database with the attendee.

Both Kumar et al. and Pepper et al. are silent with regard to an attendant/attendee relationship where if a number corresponds to an attendant terminal end-point, a line appearance that identifies an origin of the incoming call is transmitted to the attendant terminal end-point, and if the number corresponds to an attendee terminal end-point, line appearances that identify

the origin of the incoming call are transmitted to the attendee terminal end-point and to the attendant terminal end-point associated in a configuration database with the attendee. In the Office Action, the Examiner did not address these particular features.

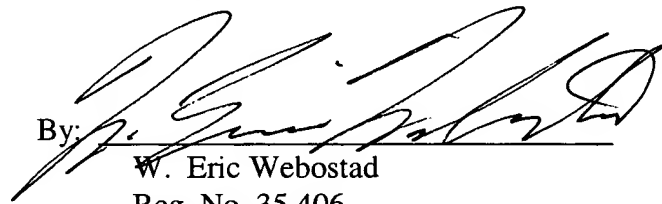
For this additional reason, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 19 is patentable over Kumar et al. and Pepper et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination.

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-19 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments to claims 1-4, 9, 15, 17, and 19 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or implied in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner. Furthermore, Applicants submit that the entry of this Amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

Application Serial No. 09/177,700
After Final Amendment
Expedited Procedure Under 37 CFR 1.116

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 07-2339. If an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, is required, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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